The Unknown Teachings of

LAO TZU

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1

I reach the Integral Way of uniting with the great and mysterious Tao. My teachings are simple; if you try to make a religion or science of them, they will elude you. Profound yet plain, they contain the entire truth of the universe. Those who wish to know the whole truth take joy in doing the work and service that comes to them. Having completed it, they take joy in cleansing and feeding themselves. Having cared for others and for themselves, they then turn to the master for instruction. This simple path leads to peace, virtue, and abundance.

2

Men and women who wish to be aware of the whole truth should adopt the practices of the Integral Way. These time-honored disciplines calm the mind and bring one into harmony with all things. The first practice is the practice of undiscriminating virtue: take care of those who are deserving; also, and equally, take care of those who are not. When you extend your virtue in all directions without discriminating, your feet are firmly planted on the path that returns to the Tao.

3

Those who wish to embody the Tao should embrace all things. To embrace all things means first that one holds no anger or resistance toward any idea or thing, living or dead, formed or formless. Acceptance is the very essence of the Tao. To embrace all things means also that one rids oneself of any concept of separation; male and female, self and other, life and death. Division is contrary to the nature of the Tao. Foregoing antagonism and separation, one enters in the harmonious oneness of all things.

4

Every departure from the Tao contaminates one's spirit. Anger is a departure, resistance a departure, self- absorption a departure. Over many lifetimes the burden of contaminations can become great. There is only one way to cleanse oneself of these contaminations, and that is to practice virtue. What is meant by this? To practice virtue is to selflessly offer assistance to others, giving without limitation one's time, abilities, and possessions in service, whenever and wherever needed, without prejudice concerning the identity of those in need. If your

willingness to give blessings is limited, so also is your ability to receive them. This is the subtle operation of the Tao.

5

Do you imagine the universe is agitated? Go into the desert at night and took out at the stars. This practice should answer the question. The superior person settles her mind as the universe settles the stars in the sky. By connecting her mind with the subtle origin, she calms it. Once calmed, it naturally expands, and ultimately her mind becomes as vast and immeasurable as the night sky.

6

The Tao gives rise to all forms, yet it has no form of its own. If you attempt to fix a picture of it in your mind, you will lose it. This is like pinning a butterfly: the husk is captured, but the flying is lost. Why not be content with simply experiencing it?

7

The teaching of the Integral Way will go on as long as there is a Tao and someone who

wishes to embody it; What is painted in these scrolls today will appear in different forms in many generations to come. These things, however, will never change: Those who wish to attain oneness must practice undiscriminating virtue. They must dissolve all ideas of duality: good and bad, beautiful and ugly, high and low. They will be obliged to abandon any mental bias born of cultural or religious belief. Indeed, they should hold their minds free of any thought which interferes with their understanding of the universe as a harmonious oneness. The beginning of these practices is the beginning of liberation.

8

I confess that there is nothing to teach: no religion, no science, no body of information which will lead your mind back to the Tao. Today I speak in this fashion, tomorrow in another, but always the Integral Way is beyond words and beyond mind. Simply be aware of the oneness of things.

9

He who desires the admiration of the world

will do well to amass a great fortune and then give it away. The world will respond with admiration in proportion to the size of his treasure. Of course, this is meaningless. Stop striving after admiration. Place your esteem on the Tao. Live in accord with it, share with others the teachings that lead to it, and you will be immersed in the blessings that flow from it.

10

The ego is a monkey catapulting through the jungle: Totally fascinated by the realm of the senses, it swings from one desire to the next, one conflict to the next, one self-centered idea to the next. If you threaten it, it actually fears for its life. Let this monkey go. Let the senses go. Let desires go. Let conflicts go. Let ideas go. Let the fiction of life and death go. Just remain in the center, watching. And then forget that you are there.

11

Does one scent appeal more than another? Do you prefer this flavor, or that feeling? Is your practice sacred and your work profane? Then your mind is separated: from itself, from

oneness, from the Tao. Keep your mind free of divisions and distinctions. When your mind is detached, simple, quiet, then all things can exist in harmony, and you can begin to perceive the subtle truth.

12

Do you wish to inhabit sacred space? To have the respect and companionship of the highest spiritual beings? To be protected by the guardians of the eight powerful energy rays? Then cherish the Integral Way: Regard these teachings with reverence, practice their truths, illuminate them to others. You will receive as many blessings from the universe as there are grains of sand in the River of Timelessness.

13

The tiny particles which form the vast universe are not tiny at all. Neither is the vast universe vast. These are notions of the mind, which is like a knife, always chipping away at the Tao, trying to render it graspable and manageable. But that which is beyond form is ungraspable, and that which is beyond knowing is unmanageable. There is, however, this

consolation: She who lets go of the knife will find the Tao at her fingertips.

14

Can you dissolve your ego? Can you abandon the idea of self and other? Can you relinquish the notions of male and female, short and long, life and death? Can you let go of all these dualities and embrace the Tao without skepticism or panic? If so, you can reach the heart of the Integral Oneness. Along the way, avoid thinking of the Oneness as unusual, exalted, sublime, transcendental. Because it is the Oneness, it is beyond all that. It is simply the direct, essential, and complete truth.

15

To the ordinary being, others often require tolerance. To the highly evolved being, there is no such thing as tolerance, because there is no such thing as other. She has given up all ideas of individuality and extended her goodwill without prejudice in every direction. Never hating, never resisting, never contesting, she is simply always learning and being. Loving, hating, having expectations: all these are attachments.

Attachment prevents the growth of one's true being. Therefore the integral being is attached to nothing and can relate to everyone with an unstructured attitude. Because of this, her very existence benefits all things. You see, that which has form is equal to that which is without form, and that which is alive is equal to that which rests. This is the subtle truth, not a religious invention, but only those who are already highly evolved will understand this.

16

Most of the world's religions serve only to strengthen attachments to false concepts such as self and other, life and death, heaven and earth, and so on. Those who become entangled in these false ideas are prevented from perceiving the Integral Oneness. The highest virtue one can exercise is to accept the responsibility of discovering and transmitting the whole truth. Some help others in order to receive blessings and admiration. This is simply meaningless. Some cultivate themselves in part to serve others, in part to serve their own pride. They will understand, at best, half of the truth. But those who improve themselves for the sake of the

world--to these, the whole truth of the universe will be revealed. So seek this whole truth, practice it in your daily life, and humbly share it with others. You will enter the realm of the divine.

17

Do not go about worshipping deities and religious institutions as the source of the subtle truth. To do so is to place intermediaries between yourself and the divine, and to make of yourself a beggar who looks outside for a treasure that is hidden inside his own breast. If you want to worship the Tao, first discover it in your own heart. Then your worship will be meaningful.

18

There is no one method for attaining realization of the Tao. To regard any method as the method is to create a duality, which can only delay your understanding of the subtle truth. The mature person perceives the fruitlessness of rigid, external methodologies; Remembering this, he keeps his attitude unstructured at all times and thus is always free to pursue the Integral Way. He studies the teachings of the

masters. He dissolves all concepts of duality. He pours himself out in service to others. He performs his inner cleansing and does not disturb his teacher with unnecessary entanglements, thus preserving the subtle spiritual connection with the teacher's divine energy. Gently eliminating all obstacles to his own understanding, he constantly maintains his unconditional sincerity. His humility, perseverance, and adaptability evoke the response of the universe and fill him with divine light.

19

To the ordinary person, the body of humanity seems vast. In truth, it is neither bigger nor smaller than anything else. To the ordinary person, there are others whose awareness needs raising. In truth, there is no self, and no other. To the ordinary person, the temple is sacred and the field is not. This, too, is a dualism which runs counter to the truth. Those who are highly evolved maintain an undiscriminating perception. Seeing everything, labeling nothing, they maintain their awareness of the Great Oneness. Thus they are supported by it.

20

The clairvoyant may see forms which are elsewhere, but he cannot see the formless. The telepathic may communicate directly with the mind of another, but he cannot communicate with one who has achieved no- mind. The telekinetic may move an object without touching it, but he cannot move the intangible. Such abilities have meaning only in the realm of duality. Therefore, they are meaningless. Within the Great Oneness, though there is no such thing as clairvoyance, telepathy, or telekinesis, all things are seen, all things understood, all things forever in their proper places.

21

Each moment is fragile and fleeting. The moment of the past cannot be kept, however beautiful. The moment of the present cannot be held, however enjoyable. The moment of the future cannot be caught, however desirable. But the mind is desperate to fix the river in place: Possessed by ideas of the past, preoccupied with images of the future, it overlooks the plain truth of the moment. The one who can dissolve her mind will suddenly discover the Tao at her feet,

and clarity at hand.

22

How can the divine Oneness be seen? In beautiful forms, breathtaking wonders, awe-inspiring miracles? The Tao is not obliged to present itself this way. It is always present and always available. When speech is exhausted and mind dissolved, it presents itself. When clarity and purity are cultivated, it reveals itself. When sincerity is unconditional, it unveils itself. If you are willing to be lived by it, you will see it everywhere, even in the most ordinary things.

23

The highest truth cannot be put into words. Therefore the greatest teacher has nothing to say. He simply gives himself in service, and never worries.

24

Subtle awareness of the truth of the universe should not be regarded as an achievement. To think in terms of achieving it is to place it outside your own nature. This is erroneous and misleading. Your nature and the integral nature

of the universe are one and the same: indescribable, but eternally present. Simply open yourself to this.

25

Not all spiritual paths lead to the Harmonious Oneness. Indeed, most are detours and distractions, nothing more. Why not trust the plainness and simplicity of the Integral Way? Living with unconditional sincerity, eradicating all duality, celebrating the equality of things, your every moment will be in truth.

26

There are two kinds of blessings. The first are worldly blessings, which are won by doing good deeds. These concern the mind, and thus are confined in time and space. The second is the integral blessing, which falls on those who achieve awareness of the Great Oneness. This awareness liberates you from the bondage of mind, time, and space to fly freely through the boundless harmony of the Tao. Similarly, there are two kinds of wisdom. The first is worldly wisdom, which is a conceptual understanding of your experiences. Because it follows after the

events themselves, it necessarily inhibits your direct understanding of truth. The second kind, integral wisdom, involves a direct participation in every moment: the observer and the observed are dissolved in the light of pure awareness, and no mental concepts or attitudes are present to dim that light. The blessings and wisdom that accrue to those who practice the Integral Way and lead others to it are a billion times greater than all worldly blessings and wisdom combined.

27

Do not imagine that an integral being has the ambition of enlightening the unaware or raising worldly people to the divine realm. To her, there is no self and other, and hence no one to be raised; no heaven and hell, and hence no destination. Therefore her only concern is her own sincerity.

28

It is tempting to view the vast and luminous heavens as the body of the Tao. That would be a mistake, however. If you identify the Tao with a particular shape, you won't ever see it.

29

Don't think you can attain total awareness and whole enlightenment without proper discipline and practice. This is egomania. Appropriate rituals channel your emotions and life energy toward the light. Without the discipline to practice them, you will tumble constantly backward into darkness. Here is the great secret: Just as high awareness of the subtle truth is gained through virtuous conduct and sustaining disciplines, so also is it maintained through these things. Highly evolved beings know and respect the truth of this.

30

Words can never convey the beauty of a tree; to understand it, you must see it with your own eyes. Language cannot capture the melody of a song; to understand it, you must hear it with your own ears. So it is with the Tao: the only way to understand it is to directly experience it. The subtle truth of the universe is unsayable and unthinkable. Therefore the highest teachings are wordless. My own words are not the medicine, but a prescription; not the destination, but a map to help you reach it. When you get there, quiet

your mind and close your mouth. Don't analyze the Tao. Strive instead to live it: silently, undividedly, with your whole harmonious being.

31

The Tao doesn't come and go. It is always present everywhere, just like the sky. If your mind is clouded, you won't see it, but that doesn't mean it isn't there. All misery is created by the activity of the mind. Can you let go of words and ideas, attitudes and expectations? If so, then the Tao will loom into view. Can you be still and look inside? If so, then you will see that the truth is always available, always responsive.

32

The ego says that the world is vast, and that the particles which form it are tiny. When tiny particles join, it says, the vast world appears. When the vast world disperses, it says, tiny particles appear. The ego is entranced by all these names and ideas, but the subtle truth is that world and particle are the same; neither one vast, neither one tiny. Every thing is equal to every other thing. Names and concepts only block your perception of this Great Oneness. Therefore it is

wise to ignore them. Those who live inside their egos are continually bewildered: they struggle frantically to know whether things are large or small, whether or not there is a purpose to joining or dispersing, whether the universe is blind and mechanical or the divine creation of a conscious being. In reality there are no grounds for having beliefs or making comments about such things. Look behind them instead, and you will discern the deep, silent, complete truth of the Tao. Embrace it, and your bewilderment vanishes.

33

Just as the world can reveal itself as particles, the Tao can reveal itself as human beings. Though world and particles aren't the same, neither are they different. Though the cosmic body and your body aren't the same, neither are they different. Worlds and particles, bodies and beings, time and space: All are transient expressions of the Tao. Unseeable, ungraspable, the Tao is beyond any attempt to analyze or categorize it. At the same time, its truth is everywhere you turn. If you can let go of it with your mind and surround it with your heart, it will

live inside you forever.

34

All things in the universe move from the subtle to the manifest and back again. Whether the form is that of a star or a person, the process is the same. First, the subtle energy exists. Next, it becomes manifest and takes on life. After a time, the life passes away, but the subtle energy goes on, either returning to the subtle realm, where it remains, or once again attaching to manifest things. The character of your existence is determined by the energies to which you connect yourself. If you attach yourself to gross energies--loving this person, hating that clan, rejecting one experience or habitually indulging in another--then you will lead a series of heavy, attached lives. This can go on for a very long and tedious time. The way of the integral being is to join with higher things. By holding to that which is refined and subtle, she traverses refined and subtle realms. If she enters the world, she does so lightly, without attachment. In this way she can go anywhere without ever leaving the center of the universe.

35

Intellectual knowledge exists in and of the brain. Because the brain is part of the body, which must one day expire, this collection of facts, however large and impressive, will expire as well. Insight, however, is a function of the spirit. Because your spirit follows you through cycle after cycle of life, death, and rebirth, you have the opportunity of cultivating insight in an ongoing fashion. Refined over time, insight becomes pure, constant, and unwavering. This is the beginning of immortality.

36

It is entirely possible for you to achieve immortality, and to experience absolute joy and freedom forever. The practice of undiscriminating virtue is the means to this end. Practicing kindness and selflessness, you naturally align your life with the Integral Way. Aligning your life with the Integral Way, you begin to eliminate the illusory boundaries between people and societies, between darkness and light, between life and death. Eliminating these illusions, you gain the company of the highest spiritual beings. In their company, you

are protected from negative influences and your life energy cannot be dissolved. Thus do you achieve immortality. Remember: it is not that those who cultivate wholeness and virtue in themselves do not encounter difficulties in life. It is that they understand that difficulties are the very road to immortality: by meeting them calmly and openly, however they unfold, and joyfully developing themselves in response to them, they become as natural, as complete, and as eternal as the Tao itself.

37

A superior person cares for the well-being of all things. She does this by accepting responsibility for the energy she manifests, both actively and in the subtle realm. Looking at a tree, she sees not an isolated event but root, leaves, trunk, water, soil and sun: each event related to the others, and "tree" arising out of their relatedness. Looking at herself or another, she sees the same thing. Trees and animals, humans and insects, flowers and birds: These are active images of the subtle energies that flow from the stars throughout the universe. Meeting and combining with each other and the elements

of the earth, they give rise to all living things. The superior person understands this, and understands that her own energies play a part in it. Understanding these things, she respects the earth as her mother, the heavens as her father, and all living things as her brothers and sisters. Caring for them, she knows that she cares for herself. Giving to them, she knows that she gives to herself. At peace with them, she is always at peace with herself.

38

Why scurry about looking for the truth? It vibrates in every thing and every not-thing, right off the tip of your nose. Can you be still and see it in the mountain? the pine tree? yourself? Don't imagine that you'll discover it by accumulating more knowledge. Knowledge creates doubt, and doubt makes you ravenous for more knowledge. You can't get full eating this way. The wise person dines on something more subtle: He eats the understanding that the named was born from the unnamed, that all being flows from non-being, that the describable world emanates from an indescribable source. He finds this subtle truth inside his own self, and becomes completely

content. So who can be still and watch the chess game of the world? The foolish are always making impulsive moves, but the wise know that victory and defeat are decided by something more subtle. They see that something perfect exists before any move is made. This subtle perfection deteriorates when artificial actions are taken, so be content not to disturb the peace. Remain quiet. Discover the harmony in your own being. Embrace it. If you can do this, you will gain everything, and the world will become healthy again. If you can't, you will be lost in the shadows forever.

39

If you go searching for the Great Creator, you will come back empty- handed. The source of the universe is ultimately unknowable, a great invisible river flowing forever through a vast and fertile valley. Silent and uncreated, it creates all things. All things are brought forth from the subtle realm into the manifest world by the mystical intercourse of yin and yang. The dynamic river yang pushes forward, the still valley yin is receptive, and through their integration things come into existence. This is

known as the Great Tai Chi. Tai chi is the integral truth of the universe. Everything is a tai chi: your body, the cosmic body, form, appearance, wisdom, energy, the unions of people, the dispersal of time and places. Each brings itself into existence through the integration of yin and yang, maintains itself, and disperses itself without the direction of any creator. Your creation, your self- transformation, the accumulation of energy and wisdom, the decline and cessation of your body: all these take place by themselves within the subtle operation of the universe. Therefore agitated effort is not necessary. Just be aware of the Great Tai Chi.

40

The natural laws of the universe are inviolable: Energy condenses into substance. Food is eaten through the mouth and not the nose. A person who neglects to breathe will turn blue and die. Some things simply can't be dismissed. It is also a part of the cosmic law that what you say and do determines what happens in your life. The ordinary person thinks that this law is external to himself and he feels confined and controlled by it. So his desires trouble his

mind, his mind troubles his spirit, and he lives in constant turmoil with himself and the world. His whole life is spent in struggling. The superior person recognizes that he and the subtle law are one. Therefore he cultivates himself to accord with it, bringing moderation to his actions and clarity to his mind. Doing this, he finds himself at one with all that is divine and enlightened. His days are passed drinking in serenity and breathing out contentment. This is the profound, simple truth: You are the master of your life and death. What you do is what you are.

41

Good and bad, self and others, life and death: Why affirm these concepts? Why deny them? To do either is to exercise the mind, and the integral being knows that the manipulations of the mind are dreams, delusions, and shadows. Hold one idea, and another competes with it. Soon the two will be in conflict with a third, and in time your life is all chatter and contradiction. Seek instead to keep your mind undivided. Dissolve all ideas into the Tao.

42

Nothing in the realm of thoughts or ideologies is absolute. Lean on one for long, and it collapses. Because of this, there is nothing more futile and frustrating than relying on the mind. To arrive at the unshakable, you must befriend the Tao. To do this, quiet your thinking. Stop analyzing, dividing, making distinctions between one thing and another. Simply see that you are at the center of the universe, and accept all things and beings as parts of your infinite body. When you perceive that an act done to another is done to yourself, you have understood the great truth.

43

In ancient times, people lived holistic lives. They didn't overemphasize the intellect, but integrated mind, body, and spirit in all things. This allowed them to become masters of knowledge rather than victims of concepts. If a new invention appeared, they looked for the troubles it might cause as well as the shortcuts it offered. They valued old ways that had been proven effective, and they valued new ways if they could be proven effective. If you want to stop being confused, then emulate these ancient

folk: join your body, mind, and spirit in all you do. Choose food, clothing, and shelter that accords with nature. Rely on your own body for transportation. Allow your work and your recreation to be one and the same. Do exercise that develops your whole being and nor just your body. Listen to music that bridges the three spheres of your being. Choose leaders for their virtue rather than their wealth or power. Serve others and cultivate yourself simultaneously. Understand that true growth comes from meeting and solving the problems of life in a way that is harmonizing to yourself and to others. If you can follow these simple old ways, you will be continually renewed.

44

This is the nature of the unenlightened mind: The sense organs, which are limited in scope and ability, randomly gather information. This partial information is arranged into judgements, which are based on previous judgements, which are usually based on someone else's foolish ideas. These false concepts and ideas are then stored in a highly selective memory system. Distortion upon distortion: the mental energy flows

constantly through contorted and inappropriate channels, and the more one uses the mind, the more confused one becomes. To eliminate the vexation of the mind, it doesn't help to do something; this only reinforces the mind's mechanics. Dissolving the mind is instead a matter of not-doing: Simply avoid becoming attached to what you see and think. Relinquish the notion that you are separated from the all-knowing mind of the universe. Then you can recover your original pure insight and see through all illusions. Knowing nothing, you will be aware of everything. Remember: because clarity and enlightenment are within your own nature, they are regained without moving an inch.

45

If you correct your mind, the rest of your life will fall into place. This is true because the mind is the governing aspect of a human life. If the river flows clearly and cleanly through the proper channel, all will be well along its banks. The Integral Way depends on decreasing, not increasing; To correct your mind, rely on not-doing. Stop thinking and clinging to

complications; keep your mind detached and whole. Eliminate mental muddiness and obscurity; keep your mind crystal clear. Avoid daydreaming and allow your pure original insight to emerge. Quiet your emotions and abide in serenity. Don't go crazy with the worship of idols, images, and ideas; this is like putting a new head on top of the head you already have. Remember: if you can cease all restless activity, your integral nature will appear.

46

The Tao gives birth to One. One gives birth to yin and yang. Yin and yang give birth to all things. Now forget this. The complete whole is the complete whole. So also is any part the complete whole. Forget this, too. Pain and happiness are simply conditions of the ego. Forget the ego. Time and space are changing and dissolving, not fixed and real. They can be thought of as accessories, but don't think of them. Supernatural beings without form extend their life force throughout the universe to support beings both formed and unformed. But never mind this; the supernatural is just a part of nature, like the natural. The subtle truth

emphasizes neither and includes both. All truth is in tai chi: to cultivate the mind, body, or spirit, simply balance the polarities. If people understood this, world peace and universal harmony would naturally arise. But forget about understanding and harmonizing and making all things one. The universe is already a harmonious oneness; just realize it. If you scramble about in search of inner peace, you will lose your inner peace.

47

Dualistic thinking is a sickness. Religion is a distortion. Materialism is cruel. Blind spirituality is unreal. Chanting is no more holy than listening to the murmur of a stream, counting prayer beads no more sacred than simply breathing, religious robes no more spiritual than work clothes. If you wish to attain oneness with the Tao, don't get caught up in spiritual superficialities. Instead, live a quiet and simple life, free of ideas and concepts. Find contentment in the practice of undiscriminating virtue, the only true power. Giving to others selflessly and anonymously, radiating light throughout the world and illuminating your own darknesses, your virtue

becomes a sanctuary for yourself and all beings. This is what is meant by embodying the Tao.

48

Do you wish to free yourself of mental and emotional knots and become one with the Tao? If so, there are two paths available to you. The first is the path of acceptance. Affirm everyone and everything. Freely extend your goodwill and virtue in every direction, regardless of circumstances. Embrace all things as part of the Harmonious Oneness, and then you will begin to perceive it. The second path is that of denial. Recognize that everything you see and think is a falsehood, an illusion, a veil over the truth. Peel all the veils away, and you will arrive at the Oneness. Though these paths are entirely different, they will deliver you to the same place: spontaneous awareness of the Great Oneness. Once you arrive there, remember: it isn't necessary to struggle to maintain unity with it. All you have to do is participate in it.

49

Thinking and talking about the Integral Way are not the same as practicing it. Who ever

became a good rider by talking about horses? If you wish to embody the Tao, stop chattering and start practicing. Relax your body and quiet your senses. Return your mind to its original clarity. Forget about being separated from others and from the Divine Source. As you return to the Oneness, do not think of it or be in awe of it. This is just another way of separating from it. Simply merge into truth, and allow it to surround you.

50

What good is it to spend your life accumulating material things? It isn't in keeping with the Tao. What benefit in conforming your behavior to someone's conventions? It violates your nature and dissipates your energy. Why separate your spiritual life and your practical life? To an integral being, there is no such distinction. Live simply and virtuously, true to your nature, drawing no line between what is spiritual and what is not. Ignore time. Relinquish ideas and concepts. Embrace the Oneness. This is the Integral Way.

51

Those who want to know the truth of the universe should practice the four cardinal virtues. The first is reverence for all life; this manifests as unconditional love and respect for oneself and all other beings. The Second is natural sincerity; this manifests as honesty, simplicity, and faithfulness. The third is gentleness; this manifests as kindness, consideration for others, and sensitivity to spiritual truth. The fourth is supportiveness; this manifests as service to others without expectation of reward. The four virtues are not an external dogma but a part of your original nature. When practiced, they give birth to wisdom and evoke the five blessings: health, wealth, happiness, longevity, and peace.

52

Do you think you can clear your mind by sitting constantly in silent meditation? This makes your mind narrow, not clear. Integral awareness is fluid and adaptable, present in all places and at all times. That is true meditation. Who can attain clarity and simplicity by avoiding the world? The Tao is clear and simple, and it doesn't avoid the world. Why not simply honor your parents, love your children, help your

brothers and sisters, be faithful to your friends, care for your mate with devotion, complete your work cooperatively and joyfully, assume responsibility for problems, practice virtue without first demanding it of others, understand the highest truths yet retain an ordinary manner? That would be true clarity, true simplicity, true mastery.

53

True understanding in a person has two attributes: awareness and action. Together they form a natural tai chi. Who can enjoy enlightenment and remain indifferent to suffering in the world? This is not in keeping with the Way. Only those who increase their service along with their understanding can be called men and women of Tao.

54

In ancient times, various holistic sciences were developed by highly evolved beings to enable their own evolution and that of others. These subtle arts were created through the linking of individual minds with the universal mind. They are still taught by traditional teachers

to those who display virtue and desire to assist others. The student who seeks our and studies these teachings furthers the evolution of mankind as well as her own spiritual unfolding. The student who ignores them hinders the development of all beings.

55

The holistic practices of the ancient masters integrate science, art, and personal spiritual development. Mind, body, and spirit participate in them equally. They include: Yi Yau, the healing science which incorporates diagnosis, acupuncture, herbal medicine, therapeutic diet, and other methods; Syang Ming, the science which predicts a person's destiny by observing the outward physical manifestations of his face, skeleton, palms, and voice; Feng Shui, the science of discerning the subtle energy rays present in a geographic location to determine whether they will properly support the activities of a building or town constructed there; Fu Kua, the observation of the subtle alterations of yin and yang for the purpose of making decisions which are harmonious with the apparent and hidden aspects of a situation. The foundation of

Fu Kua and of all Taoist practice is the study of the I Ching, or Book of Changes. Nei Dan, Wai Dan, and Fang Jung, the sciences of refining one's personal energy through alchemy, chemistry, and the cultivation of balanced sexual energy; Tai Syi, the science of revitalization through breathing and visualization techniques; Chwun Shi, the transformation of one's spiritual essence through keeping one's thoughts in accord with the Divine Source; Shu-Ser, the attunement of one's daily life to the cycle of universal energy rays; Bi Gu, the practice of fasting on specific days in order to gather life energy emanating from the harmonized positions of certain stars; Sau Yi, the science of embracing integral transcendental oneness in order to accomplish conception of the 'mystical pearl'; Tai Chi Ch'uan, the performance of physical exercises to induce and direct energy flows within the body to gain mastery of body, breath, mind, the internal organs, and life and death; Fu Chi, the science of reforming and refining one's energy with pure food and herbs; Chuan Se, the inner visualization of the unity of one's inner and outer being; 'Dzai Jing, the purification of one's energy through ascetic practices; Fu Jou, the drawing of

mystical pictures and the writing and recital of mystical invocations for the purpose of evoking a response from the subtle realm of the universe; Tsan Syan, the process of dissolving the ego and connecting with the Great Oneness through the study of classical scriptures and daily dialogue with an enlightened master; Lyou Yen and Chi Men, the mystical sciences of energy linkage for the purpose of influencing external affairs. Of these, the most important for beginners is the study of the I Ching, which enables one to perceive the hidden influences in every situation and thus establish a balanced and spiritually evolved means of responding to them. All are instruments for attaining the Tao. To study them is to serve universal unity, harmony, and wisdom.

56

If you wish to become a person of Tao, then study that which serves the nature of life, and offer it to the world. Allow your devotion to learning the Taoist ways to be complete. Partial practice and partial discipline won't do. You can't know the body by studying the finger, and you can't understand the universe by learning one

science. If you study the whole of the Tao wholeheartedly, then everything in your life will reflect it.

57

The universe is a vast net of energy rays. The primary ray is that which emanates from the Subtle Origin, and it is entirely positive, creative, and constructive. Each being, however, converts the energy of this primary ray into its own ray, and these lower rays can be either positive or negative, constructive or destructive. An individual who is not yet fully evolved can be adversely affected by negative energy rays in the net around him. For example, the combined influence of several negative rays might cause an undeveloped person to believe that his life is being controlled by an invisible, oppressive ruler. Such a misconception can be a significant barrier to enlightenment. To attain full evolution and the status of an integral being, you must be aware of this intricate net and its influences upon you. By integrating the positive, harmonious energy rays with the positive elements of your own being, and eliminating the subtle negative influences, you can enhance all aspects of your life. In order

to eliminate the negative influences, simply ignore them. To integrate the positive influences, consciously reconnect yourself with the primary energy ray of the Subtle Origin by adopting the practices of the Integral Way. Then all the rays in the net around you will merge back into harmonious oneness.

58

Unless the mind, body, and spirit are equally developed and fully integrated, no spiritual peak or state of enlightenment can be sustained. This is why extremist religions and ideologies do not bear fruit. When the mind and spirit are forced into unnatural austerities or adherence to external dogmas, the body grows sick and weak and becomes a traitor to the whole being. When the body is emphasized to the exclusion of the mind and spirit, they become like trapped snakes: frantic, explosive, and poisonous to one's person. All such imbalances inevitably lead to exhaustion and expiration of the life force. True self- cultivation involves the holistic integration of mind, body, and spirit. Balancing yin and yang through the various practices of the Integral Way, one achieves complete unity within and

without. This manifests in the world as perfect equilibrium, and perfect grace.

59

Greed for enlightenment and immortality is no different than greed for material wealth. It is self-centered and dualistic, and thus an obstacle to true attainment. Therefore these states are never achieved by those who covet them; rather, they are the reward of the virtuous. If you wish to become a divine immortal angel, then restore the angelic qualities of your being through virtue and service. This is the only way to gain the attention of the immortals who teach the methods of energy enhancement and integration that are necessary to reach the divine realm. These angelic teachers cannot be sought out; it is they who seek out the student. When you succeed in connecting your energy with the divine realm through high awareness and the practice of undiscriminating virtue, the transmission of the ultimate subtle truths will follow. This is the path that all angels take to the divine realm.

60

The mystical techniques for achieving

immortality are revealed only to those who have dissolved all ties to the gross worldly realm of duality, conflict, and dogma. As long as your shallow worldly ambitions exist, the door will not open. Devote yourself to living a virtuous, integrated, selfless life. Refine your energy from gross and heavy to subtle and light. Use the practices of the Integral Way to transform your superficial worldly personality into a profound, divine presence. By going through each stage of development along the Integral Way, you learn to value what is important today in the subtle realm rather than what appears desirable tomorrow in the worldly realm. Then the mystical door will open. and you can join the unruling rulers and uncreating creators of the vast universe.

61

To understand the universe, you must study and understand these things: First, the Oneness, the Tao, the Great Tai Chi Second, the Great Two, the forces of yin and yang; Third, the Three Main Categories, expressed either as Heaven, Earth, and Man, or as body mind, and spirit; Fourth, the Four Forces, strong, weak, light, and

heavy; Fifth, the Five Elements, symbolized by water, fire, wood, metal, and earth; Sixth, the Six Breaths--wind, cold, heat, moisture, dryness, and inflammation--which transform the climate and the internal organs; Seventh, the processes of change and recycling; Eighth, the Eight Great Manifestations--Heaven, Earth, Water, Fire, Thunder, Lake, Wind, and Mountain--the combinations of which reveal the subtle energetic truth of all situations, as taught in the I Ching. Understanding these things, you can employ them internally to leave behind what is old and dead and to embrace what is new and alive. Once discovered, this process of internal alchemy opens the mystical gate to spiritual immortality.

62

Do you wish to attain pure Tao? Then you must understand and integrate within yourself the three main energies of the universe. The first is the earth energy. Centered in the belly, it expresses itself as sexuality. Those who cultivate and master the physical energy attain partial purity. The second is the heaven energy. Centered in the mind, it expresses itself as

knowledge and wisdom. Those whose minds merge with the Universal Mind also attain partial purity. The third is the harmonized energy. Centered in the heart, it expresses itself as spiritual insight. Those who develop spiritual insight also attain partial purity. Only when you achieve all three-mastery of the physical energy, universal mindedness, and spiritual insight-and express them in a virtuous integral life, can you attain pure Tao.

63

There are three layers to the universe: In the lower, Tai Ching, and the middle, Shan Ching, the hindrance of a physical bodily existence is required. Those who fail to live consistently in accord with Tao reside here. In the upper, Yu Ching, there is only Tao: the bondage of form is broken, and the only thing existing is the exquisite energy dance of the immortal divine beings. Those who wish to enter Yu Ching should follow the Integral Way. Simplify the personality, refine the sexual energy upward, integrate yin and yang in body, mind, and spirit, practice non-impulsiveness, make your conscience one with pure law, and you will

uncover truth after truth and enter the exquisite upper realm. This path is clearly defined and quite simple to follow, yet most lose themselves in ideological fogs of their own making.

64

In earlier times, people lived simply and serenely. Sensitive to the fluctuations that constantly occur, they were able to adjust comfortably to the energy of the day. Today, people lead hysterical, impulsive lives. Ignoring the subtle alterations of yin and yang which influence all things, they become confused, exhausted, and frustrated. However, even today one can restore wholeness and clarity to one's mind. The way to do this is through study of the I Ching. Like the cycle of day and night, everything is a tai chi incorporating movements between yin and yang. If you do not see the patterns in these movements, you are lost. But if you consult the I Ching with an open mind, you will begin to see the patterns underlying all things. Knowing that daybreak will come, you can rest peacefully at night. When you accurately perceive the fluidity of things, you also begin to perceive the constancy behind them: the creative,

transformative, boundless, immutable Tao. To see this is the ultimate education, and the ultimate solace.

65

The interplay of yin and yang within the womb of the Mysterious Mother creates the expansion and contraction of nature. Although the entire universe is created out of this reproductive dance, it is but a tiny portion of her being. Her heart is the Universal Heart, and her mind the Universal Mind. The reproductive function is also a part of human beings. Because yin and yang are not complete within us as individuals, we pair up to integrate them and bring forth new life. Although most people spend their entire lives following this biological impulse, it is only a tiny portion of our beings as well. If we remain obsessed with seeds and eggs, we are married to the fertile reproductive valley of the Mysterious Mother but not to her immeasurable heart and all-knowing mind. If you wish to unite with her heart and mind, you must integrate yin and yang within and refine their fire upward. Then you have the power to merge with the whole being of the Mysterious

Mother. This is what is known as true evolution.

66

The first integration of yin and yang is the union of seed and egg within the womb. The second integration of yin and yang is the sexual union of the mature male and female. Both of these are concerned with flesh and blood, and all that is conceived in this realm must one day disintegrate and pass away. It is only the third integration which gives birth to something immortal, In this integration, a highly evolved individual joins the subtle inner energies of yin and yang under the light of spiritual understanding. Through the practices of the Integral Way he refines his gross, heavy energy into something ethereal and light. This divine light has the capability of penetrating into the mighty ocean of spiritual energy and complete wisdom that is the Tao. The new life created by the final integration is self- aware yet without ego, capable of inhabiting a body yet not attached to it, and guided by wisdom rather than emotion. Whole and virtuous, it can never die.

67

To achieve the highest levels of life, one must continually combine new levels of yin and yang. In nature, the male energy can be found in such sources as the sun and the mountains, and the female in such sources as the earth, the moon, and the lakes. Those who study these things, which are only hinted at here, will benefit immeasurably. Because higher and higher unions of yin and yang are necessary for the conception of higher life, some students may be instructed in the art of dual cultivation, in which yin and yang are directly integrated in the tai chi of sexual intercourse. If the student is not genuinely virtuous and the instruction not that of a true master, dual cultivation can have a destructive effect. If genuine virtue and true mastery come together, however, the practice can bring about a profound balancing of the student's gross and subtle energies. The result of this is improved health, harmonized emotions, the cessation of desires and impulses, and, at the highest level, the transcendent integration of the entire energy body.

68

In angelic dual cultivation, one learns to

follow the Tao. To approach the Tao, you will need all your sincerity, for it is elusive, first revealing itself in form and image, then dissolving into subtle, indefinable essence. Though it is uncreated itself, it creates all things. Because it has no substance, it can enter into where there is no space. Exercising by returning to itself, winning victories by remaining gentle and yielding, it is softer than anything, and therefore it overcomes everything hard. What does this tell you about the benefit of non- action and silence?

69

A person's approach to sexuality is a sign of his level of evolution. Unevolved persons practice ordinary sexual intercourse. Placing all emphasis upon the sexual organs, they neglect the body's other organs and systems. Whatever physical energy is accumulated is summarily discharged, and the subtle energies are similarly dissipated and disordered. It is a great backward leap. For those who aspire to the higher realms of living, there is angelic dual cultivation. Because every portion of the body, mind, and spirit yearns for the integration of yin and yang, angelic

intercourse is led by the spirit rather than the sexual organs. Where ordinary intercourse is effortful, angelic cultivation is calm, relaxed, quiet, and natural. Where ordinary intercourse unites sex organs with sex organs, angelic cultivation unites spirit with spirit, mind with mind, and every cell of one body with every cell of the other body. Culminating not in dissolution but in integration, it is an opportunity for a man and woman to mutually transform and uplift each other into the realm of bliss and wholeness. The sacred ways of angelic intercourse are taught only by one who has himself achieved total energy integration, and taught only to students who follow the Integral Way with profound devotion, seeking to purify and pacify the entire world along with their own being. However, if your virtue is especially radiant, it can be possible to open a pathway to the subtle realm and receive these celestial teachings directly from the immortals.

70

The cords of passion and desire weave a binding net around you. Worldly confrontation makes you stiff and inflexible. The trap of

duality is tenacious. Bound, rigid, and trapped, you cannot experience liberation. Through dual cultivation it is possible to unravel the net, soften the rigidity, dismantle the trap. Dissolving your yin energy into the source of universal life, attracting the yang energy from that same source, you leave behind individuality and your life becomes pure nature. Free of ego, living naturally, working virtuously, you become filled with inexhaustible vitality and are liberated forever from the cycle of death and rebirth. Understand this if nothing else: spiritual freedom and oneness with the Tao are not randomly bestowed gifts, but the rewards of conscious self-transformation and self-evolution.

71

The transformation toward eternal life is gradual. The heavy, gross energy of body, mind, and spirit must first be purified and uplifted. When the energy ascends to the subtle level, then self-mastery can be sought. A wise instructor teaches the powerful principles of self-integration only to those who have already achieved a high level of self-purification and self-mastery. In addition, all proper teaching

follows the law of energy response: the most effective method is always that to which the student's natural energy most harmoniously responds. For one, celibacy and self-cultivation will be appropriate; for another, properly guided dual cultivation will derive the greatest benefit. A discerning teacher will determine the proper balance of practices for each individual. In any case, know that all teachers and techniques are only transitional: true realization comes from the direct merger of one's being with the divine energy of the Tao.

72

If you wish to gain merit and become one with the divine, then develop your virtue and extend it to the world. Abandon fancy theologies and imaginary ideas and do some ordinary daily work, such as healing. Let go of all conflict and strife. Practice unswerving kindness and unending patience. Avoid following impulses and pursuing ambitions which destroy the wholeness of your mind and separate you from the Integral Way. Neither become obsessed with circumstances nor forego awareness of them. To manage your mind, know that there is nothing,

and then relinquish all attachment to the nothingness.

73

The teacher cannot aid the student as long as the student's spirit is contaminated. The cleansing of the spiritual contamination is not the responsibility of the teacher, but of the student. It is accomplished by offering one's talent, resources, and life to the world. Also, to the teacher and to the immortal angels that surround him, a healthy student can offer his pure energy, and a depleted student can give at the very least food, or wine, or service. When one gives whatever one can without restraint, the barriers of individuality break down. It no longer becomes possible to tell whether it is the student offering himself to the teacher, or the teacher offering herself to the student. One sees only two immaculate beings, reflecting one another like a pair of brilliant mirrors.

74

There are those who derive energy from worshipping and meditating on divine beings and deities. If you feel inclined to worship, then

worship these: Worship the fiery sun, repository of yang, and the watery moon, repository of yin; Worship the spiritual centers of men and women, which are angelic in every sense; Worship the Eight Great Manifestations: Heaven, Earth, Water, Fire, Thunder, Lake, Wind, and Mountain; Worship the sixty-four hexagrams of the I Ching, which illuminate the underlying harmony of the universe; Finally, worship the Great Tai Chi, in which all things are contained, balanced, and reposed.

75

Would you like to liberate yourself from the lower realms of life? Would you like to save the world from the degradation and destruction it seems destined for? Then step away from shallow mass movements and quietly go to work on your own self-awareness. If you want to awaken all of humanity, then awaken all of yourself. If you want to eliminate the suffering in the world, then eliminate all that is dark and negative in yourself. Truly, the greatest gift you have to give is that of your own self-transformation. So find a teacher who is an integral being, a beacon who extends his light

and virtue with equal ease to those who appreciate him and those who don't. Shape yourself in his mold, bathe in his nourishing radiance, and reflect it out to the rest of the world. You will come to understand an eternal truth: there is always a peaceful home for a virtuous being.

76

Who can save the world? Perhaps one who devotedly follows these teachings, who calms her mind, who ignores all divergence, who develops a high awareness of the subtle truths, who merges her virtue with the universal virtue and extends it to the world without expectation of reward. She will indeed be the savior of the world.

77

Humanity grows more and more intelligent, yet there is clearly more trouble and less happiness daily. How can this be so? It is because intelligence is not the same thing as wisdom. When a society misuses partial intelligence and ignores holistic wisdom, its people forget the benefits of a plain and natural

life. Seduced by their desires, emotions, and egos, they become slaves to bodily demands, to luxuries, to power and unbalanced religion and psychological excuses. Then the reign of calamity and confusion begins. Nonetheless, superior people can awaken during times of turmoil to lead others out of the mire. But how can the one liberate the many? By first liberating his own being. He does this nor by elevating himself, but by lowering himself. He lowers himself to that which is simple, modest, true; integrating it into himself, he becomes a master of simplicity, modesty, truth. Completely emancipated from his former false life, he discovers his original pure nature, which is the pure nature of the universe. Freely and spontaneously releasing his divine energy, he constantly transcends complicated situations and draws everything around him back into an integral oneness. Because he is a living divinity, when he acts, the universe acts.

78

There are many partial religions, and then there is the Integral Way. Partial religions are desperate, clever, human inventions; the Integral

Way is a deep expression of the pure, whole, universal mind. Partial religions rely on the hypnotic manipulation of undeveloped minds; the Integral Way is founded on the free transmission of the plain, natural, immutable truth. It is a total reality, not an occult practice. The Integral Way eschews conceptual fanaticism, extravagant living, fancy food, violent music. They spoil the serenity of one's mind and obstruct one's spiritual development. Renouncing what is fashionable and embracing what is plain, honest, and virtuous, the Integral Way returns you to the subtle essence of life. Adopt its practices and you will become like they are: honest, simple, true, virtuous, whole. You see, in partial pursuits, one's transformation is always partial as well. But in integral self-cultivation, it is possible to achieve a complete metamorphosis, to transcend your emotional and biological limitations and evolve to a higher state of being. By staying out of the shadows and following this simple path, you become extraordinary, unfathomable, a being of profound cosmic subtlety. You outlive time and space by realizing the subtle truth of the universe.

Those in future generations who study and practice the truth of these teachings will be blessed. They will acquire the subtle light of wisdom, the mighty sword of clarity that cuts through all obstruction, and the mystical pearl of understanding that envelops the entire universe. They will attain the insight necessary to perceive the integral truth of the Tao. Following this truth with unabashed sincerity, they will become it: whole, courageous, indestructible, unnameable.

80

The world is full of half-enlightened masters. Overly clever, too "sensitive" to live in the real world, they surround themselves with selfish pleasures and bestow their grandiose teachings upon the unwary. Prematurely publicizing themselves, intent upon reaching some spiritual climax, they constantly sacrifice the truth and deviate from the Tao. What they really offer the world is their own confusion. The true master understands that enlightenment is not the end, but the means. Realizing that virtue is her goal, she accepts the long and often arduous cultivation that is necessary to attain it. She doesn't scheme to become a leader, but quietly

shoulders whatever responsibilities fall to her. Unattached to her accomplishments, taking credit for nothing at all, she guides the whole world by guiding the individuals who come to her. She shares her divine energy with her students, encouraging them, creating trials to strengthen them, scolding them to awaken them, directing the streams of their lives toward the infinite ocean of the Tao. If you aspire to this sort of mastery, then root yourself in the Tao. Relinquish your negative habits and attitudes. Strengthen your sincerity. Live in the real world, and extend your virtue to it without discrimination in the daily round. Be the truest father or mother, the truest brother or sister, the truest friend, and the truest disciple. Humbly respect and serve your teacher, and dedicate your entire being unwaveringly to self-cultivation. Then you will surely achieve self-mastery and he able to help others in doing the same.

81

With all this talking, what has been said? The subtle truth can be pointed at with words, but it can't be contained by them. Take time to listen to what is said without words, to obey the law too

subtle to be written, to worship the unnameable and to embrace the unformed. Love your life. Trust the Tao. Make love with the invisible subtle origin of the universe, and you will give yourself everything you need. You won't have to hide away forever in spiritual retreats. You can be a gentle, contemplative hermit right here in the middle of everything, utterly unaffected, thoroughly sustained and rewarded by your integral practices. Encouraging others, giving freely to all, awakening and purifying the world with each movement and action, you'll ascend to the divine realm in broad daylight. The breath of the Tao speaks, and those who are in harmony with it hear quite clearly.